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THE OBSTRUCTION OF PEACE

BY DAVID JAYNE HILL

IT has become increasingly difficult to comment freely upon the conduct of the President of the United States without exceeding the limits of expression which a patriotic citizen desires to observe when speaking of the Chief Magistrate of the Nation. It was with surprise and regret that the country received the President's announcement of his desire for a "challenge" and the reference to his "fighting blood," accompanied with a wish for an opportunity to "let it have scope," in his speech at Boston on the occasion of his brief visit to the United States. The people were expecting a clear and dispassionate exposition of the purport and the relation to the interests of the Nation of the document that had been sent from Paris as a project of a "League of Nations," and were prepared to receive the President's message regarding it with respectful attention in order to form a judgment of its merits. There seems to have been no occasion for a belligerent mood on the part of anyone, and this unexpected display of personal feeling appeared to those who desired to receive enlightenment on a subject of such great consequence as a rather grotesque method of approaching the discussion of universal peace.

That some new international undertaking should result from the experience of the Great War is evident to all thoughtful men, but the problem of the nature and extent of new and perpetual obligations to be assumed by the United States regarding other countries, is too serious to be treated in a light manner, and the solution of it too heavily charged with consequences to be accepted without careful consideration by all whom the consequences will affect.

The circumstances in which this country has been placed by the President's decision to carry into execution a policy in contradiction to all the traditions of the Republic find no

parallel in the history of any free people in the enjoyment of constitutional liberty. They recall the occasion when the former German Emperor, without consulting the constitutionally authorized officers of the German Empire, undertook, in his private capacity, to carry on negotiations with a foreign Power by procuring an alliance with the Czar of Russia; and the other occasion when the same sovereign attempted to influence the sentiment of the British people by an expression of his personal views in a published interview, and was called to account by the Reichstag. In these instances of purely personal diplomacy, which have been severely criticized both in Germany and elsewhere, the sovereign merely assumed that he had a perfect right to propose and carry into effect what he believed would be for the good of his country. The ground of objection to his conduct was not that as sovereign he did not have charge of the foreign relations of the Empire, a duty which the Imperial Constitution imposed upon him, but that he had exceeded the constitutional limits in his method of procedure; in brief, that his authority was not personal but official, and that officially he could speak and act only in conjunction with other officers also speaking and acting in their joint capacity.

It is, of course, not disputed that the President of the United States is charged by the Constitution with the duty, "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate," of negotiating treaties with foreign governments. It has, however, been customary, and it is the evident intent of the Constitution of the United States, that in the process of treaty-making, even in the most ordinary matters,—much more in the case of the settlement of the most important issue regarding the peace and safety of the world that has arisen in the present generation, or is likely to arise,—the President should not proceed alone. As Hamilton wrote in the *Federalist*, when urging the adoption of the Constitution, "The history of human conduct does not warrant that exalted opinion of human virtue which would make it wise in a nation to commit interests of so delicate and momentous a kind, as those which concern its intercourse with the rest of the world, to the sole disposal of a magistrate created and circumstanced as would be the President of the United States."

If this caution was deemed necessary regarding decisions

affecting merely those matters relating in a general way to "intercourse with the rest of the world," what is to be said of a scheme to revolutionize the whole plan of international relationship, involving permanent and unalterable bonds of obligation between many nations as yet unnamed in the covenant, and thus far non-existent as established and generally recognized States?

Certainly, it could never have been contemplated by the founders of this Republic that one man, however great, and wise, and noble, should be empowered to pool the interests of this nation with those of other nations unless "by and with the advice and consent" of at least one branch of the representatives of the people, and thus to commit both of the legislative branches of the Government and the property and persons of the people to undertakings incapable of previous precise definition and in terms so broad that they might easily give rise to controversy and even to ultimate dissent and refusal.

Could it have been imagined that any person honored with the prerogatives and responsibilities of the presidency of the United States would even presume, in defiance of public opinion, to disregard the precedents of more than a century, and insist upon leaving his country repeatedly, and for long periods, in the midst of important public business, and appoint himself, accompanied by a retinue of persons chosen only by himself and wholly subservient to his dictates, as the personal negotiator, not of an immediate peace,—which alone might justify an unusual procedure, in order that the victors in a frightful war might promptly guard themselves against future aggression in the manner desired by those most exposed to danger,—but to impose upon other nations, as the price of future American aid and friendship, a plan of world reconstruction evolved from his own inner consciousness, which had not only never been publicly discussed by his fellow-citizens, but had never been disclosed even to the co-ordinate branch of the Government in the exercise of the treaty-making power?

Such a course could certainly never be taken "by and with the advice and consent of the Senate." And it should not be overlooked that in the making of treaties it is "advice," as well as consent, which is authorized as essential to the proper performance of that duty.

Who of our American presidents has ever placed such

confidence in himself, or so presumed upon the confidence of others, as to demand the privilege of acting without such advice, or would exercise it without diffidence and every fortification of wise counsel, even if urged by his fellow-citizens to assume this responsibility?

In Europe, where the head of a State has great authority, no sovereign would undertake so large an enterprise. Once, by accident, the late King of England, Edward VII, whose discretion was unusual, met and held conversation with another sovereign, without the presence of a minister. There were no negotiations, and probably there was no utterance on either side beyond what the courtesies of casual intercourse demanded; but immediately there was public criticism in the London newspapers of this disregard of the British Constitution, and it was demanded as a matter of public right that the sovereign should not hold such conversation without the presence of a minister. There was probably only one sovereign in Europe who would resent such criticism, and he is no longer a sovereign.

An American President, it may be thought, is himself his own prime minister. This is an error. He is a definitely delegated representative of a sovereign people, possessing no powers which are not included in the constitutional designation of his functions, by which also they are strictly limited. By etiquette he ranks with royalty in a foreign country because he is the head of a State; but in point of influence he is for that reason more potent than any minister. An American President is never embarrassed by the presence of his ministers. A prime minister is the creature of a Parliament, and subject to its will. He can be overthrown at any moment, and a successor takes his place. A President can be impeached—a difficult process—but he is as secure in the exercise of power, within constitutional limits, during his term of office, as a treasure is secure in a steel safe-deposit vault behind the trusty bolts that will be withdrawn only when the time-lock releases them.

From a European point of view, the President must be taken at his own self-valuation. It is naturally assumed that what he promises he can perform. When, therefore, he states what the United States will do no one questions his powers of execution. He carries the destiny of the country in his closed hand more effectively than any king or emperor under a parliamentary régime could do.

While an American President has this advantage over any minister or even any sovereign in Europe, the President of the United States well understands the embarrassment of the heads of other governments at a moment when combined strength is needed to facilitate an issue from a condition of emergency. Without America the balance of power that has won the war would be lost and the victory forfeited.

In such circumstances the President does not hesitate to speak disparagingly of European governments. Unless they adopt a "League of Nations," he declares openly, they are likely to be brushed aside. The "people" he affirms are the ultimate authority, and it is to the people that he appeals. It is upon this popular pressure that he depends to influence the governments, of whose spontaneous inclination he expresses doubts. "The nations of the world," he said in his speech on landing at Boston, "have set their heads to do a great thing, and they are not going to slacken their purpose." But he hastens to explain that he does not mean the governments. Having received the plaudits of the multitude as a distinguished foreigner and apostle of liberty, when he made his tour of Europe before the Peace Congress assembled, he has made evident to his own mind something which the governments seem not to have been aware of before, but with which he affirms they are duly impressed now. "When I speak of the nations of the world," he says, "I do not speak of the governments of the world. I speak of the peoples who constitute the nations of the world. They are in the saddle and they are going to see to it that if their present governments do not do their will some other governments shall. And the secret is out and the present governments know it."

What is the nature of this "secret"? With whom has our President been conferring? The governments now also are said to participate in this disclosure, but apparently it did not come originally from them. It is something that has been forced upon them through popular pressure, and it is upon this that the President counts as the basis of the "League of Nations" which the governments will be compelled to accept or give way to others. His confidence is not founded upon those with whom he has been negotiating, but upon those who will have "other governments" decide the question if their will is not obeyed.

Who are those "other governments"? Are they governments foreign to those people—ours for example—who are to force obedience to the popular will, or are they revolutionary governments yet to be created? Would the President of the United States be pleased to have any foreign potentate, or even an ambassador, tour the United States, making popular speeches in our cities, and then make such observations regarding the American Government with which the stranger had come to negotiate?

Judging by the President's estimate of the European nations—and he is speaking not of governments but of nations now, by which he says he means "peoples"—Europe is sadly in need of a guardian, but would prove an unruly ward.

Here is his graphic picture of the nations with which, in the future, he desires us to be closely associated, and by whose collective judgment he wishes our future policy to be determined:

You understand that the nations of Europe have again and again clashed with one another in competitive interest. It is impossible for men to forget these sharp issues that were drawn between them in times past. It is impossible for men to believe that all ambitions have all of a sudden been foregone. They remember territory that was coveted; they remember rights that it was attempted to extort; they remember political ambitions which it was attempted to realize—and, which they believe that men have come into a different temper, they cannot forget these things, and so they do not resort to one another for a dispassionate view of the matters in controversy.

If this is a just estimate of the European nations, it would appear to be the part of wisdom for a distant people to keep as far as possible from intervention in any of their quarrels. The picture, however, is drawn with no discrimination, and is as erroneous in substance as it is unjust in its implications. It is monstrous to include innocent Belgium, which did resort to the good faith of others for a dispassionate view; or France, which has been made the victim of every crime; or Great Britain, which has played a noble part in the endeavor to avoid strife and to save the world from the ruin of civilization, in the picture of a discordant and distrustful Europe which the President has drawn in the paragraph just quoted. These countries have stood together, and fought together, amidst great sacrifices, to put down aggression; and this is the first time that anyone has revived the unhappy memories of a past that has been

buried, to question the solidarity and mutual confidence that existed in the Entente before the President went to Europe. It is injurious and unpardonable to try to make it appear that America, and America alone, can harmonize a discordant Europe, and lead the music in a new concert of world power. The nations of the Entente and the governments of the Entente are as capable of pursuing high ideals and creating the conditions of peace as America herself, and are as much disposed to do so. It is both sophistical and reprehensible to appeal to American pride, and to exalt American conceit, by detraction from the capacities of Powers with problems far more serious to solve than any which confront this nation.

The truth is that America very tardily, but with abundant and long disregarded warning of what awaited her, finally came into the war in time to prevent the defeat of the Entente by adding a fresh force to tip the scale of the balance of power, and it was this new preponderance that won the war.

It will require the maintenance of that superior counterpoise to conclude and enforce a victorious peace. That is the immediate problem, and the only immediate problem. The imposing of just, but necessarily punitive, terms of peace on Germany and her allies would secure the peace of the world for a long time to come. Ulterior questions of international reorganization could then be discussed calmly and effectively in the light of the conditions which would prevail when peace had been concluded and the power to enforce it had been demonstrated. Until that power can be proved to exist by actual achievement, the speculations about permanent and universal peace are mere excursions in dreamland.

Instead of promoting peace, the efforts of the President of the United States to impose his own views and to array the populations of other countries behind them by bringing pressure—if that has actually been the case—upon other governments have seriously impeded and obstructed the only peace in which the world is really interested at this time, and for the need of which whole nations are dying with hunger and are kept in an abnormal and dangerous state of mind as a climax to their physical distress. In the meantime the Entente is weakening through discouragement and the enemy is reorganizing, if not for resistance

at least to display a refractory attitude toward conditions of peace that could at one time have been easily imposed.

There is no division of opinion in the United States regarding the duty of this country to stand firmly with our Allies in this war in the complete suppression of a common enemy and the maintenance of a peace thus imposed. Yet the President raises the sophistical question, "If America were at this juncture to fail the world, what would become of it? I do not mean any disrespect to any other great people when I say that America is the hope of the world, and if she does not justify that hope the results are unthinkable. Men will be thrown back upon the bitterness of disappointment not only, but the bitterness of despair. All nations will be set up as hostile camps again; the men at the peace conference will go home with their heads upon their breasts, knowing that they have failed—for they were bidden not to come home from there until they did something more than sign a treaty of peace."

What necessity is there for raising the impertinent and defamatory question, What would become of the world if America failed to do her duty? The American people have no thought of failing in the performance of their duty, and the description of what would happen if they did fail is superfluous. The real question is, *What is America's duty?* and it is not answered by a dogmatic assertion that America must make herself responsible for the future peace of the whole world, which may be beyond her powers of accomplishment. Her plain duty is to do now what she can do, which is by loyal coöperation with her Allies to impose and maintain immediate peace on a common enemy growing every day more dangerous.

The President has never frankly spoken of the Powers with whom we have together fought in this war as our "Allies." For a long time he was in a state of cold neutrality regarding them. Gradually they became in his mind "associates," but they have never seemed nearer than that; and to-day his aim is to place them, after this intimate companionship in action and suffering, in which our soldiers and sailors have fought side by side with British, and French, and Belgian, and Italian combatants to win a common cause, in a "general association of nations" to which he would have all peoples irrespective of their affinities equally belong.

The President's mind seems always to dwell in a region of abstractions. The concrete does not appeal to him. Overlooking the pressing necessity of immediate peace, the one imperative duty in this regard has not been performed. His policy has been, and is, world reconstruction first and peace afterward. This policy has obstructed and prevented the action by the Entente Allies that should have been taken, and would have been taken, but for his personal interference. It was the right of the Entente Allies, as victors, to impose an immediate peace upon the enemy; and it was the duty of the United States not only to aid in this, but to secure the execution and preservation of the peace after the treaty of peace was signed. It could not then be said of it, as the President says, that such a treaty would be a "scrap of paper."

If, in November, 1918, when the German armies were defeated in the field and called for an armistice, a peace had been signed during that month at Berlin, Germany and her allies would have known that they were beaten, and that the terms insuring a European peace would be imposed and would have to be carried out. Among those terms it would have been proper to include this: that any attempt on the part of the Central Powers or their Allies to make an unprovoked attack upon any of the Entente Powers would be regarded as an attack upon all, including the United States. That would have been the honorable way for America to have treated her co-belligerents in the war against a common enemy, and that alone would have been sufficient to dispel all thoughts of war for a long time to come. Peace once secured, the new nationalities would have had an opportunity to complete their organization under conditions of peace, and Russian Bolshevism could have been taken in hand and suppressed by a united Europe. France would have been made at once secure. Without this, the war has been virtually lost. That security was the first and most pressing problem, and it is still unsolved.

And what is the situation that has been allowed to develop? I quote the words of one of the most candid and best informed observers of the proceedings of the Peace Conference now in Paris. "Mr. Wilson came to Paris," says Mr. Frank H. Simonds,

Resolved that there should be a league of nations. * * * Finding French interest and French attention fixed upon the salvation of

France rather than upon the formulation of the principles of a league of nations, Mr. Wilson and those associated with him were not successful in concealing their disappointment or their disapproval of what seemed to them a particularistic national policy. When France as a whole asked Mr. Wilson to go and see her devastated regions, that he might understand her heart, he returned a cold and unequivocal negative. I do not think that any single act of any man ever carried with it profounder disappointment than Mr. Wilson's refusal to go to the northern regions and see what the boche had done.

And we have had, week after week, a slow but sure change in French emotion with respect to the President. He was hailed by the little people of France as a savior. He was hailed as a man who came from another world to deliver France and other peoples of the world from the shadow of tragedy which had been, and little by little his course here had the effect at least of creating the impression that he cared nothing for the life or death of France, that he was not concerned with those things which the tragic years of war had burned into the soul of every French man and woman.

I do not think it possible accurately to represent how profound was the disappointment of France at this course of the American President. A sense first of desertion and then of utter isolation crept into the French heart, as more and more the American attitude toward France passed from mere coldness with respect of French necessities to open criticism and hardly concealed suspicion. I do not think one would exaggerate by saying that three months ago France believed the war won and to-day, as a result of what has occurred here in the peace conference, there is something amounting to real terror lest the war shall be lost after all, and France left alone again across the pathway of a Germany increased in power and population by the last war.

These words were received from Paris on the very day when the President was delivering his speech in Boston, in which there was not one word regarding the sufferings and peril of France, but the intimation of changes of government in Europe, if a "League" was not accepted. At the same time the newspapers were informing us that the Constitution finally assented to as a project for a "League" is by no means a spontaneous embodiment of the desires of the fourteen nations alleged to have adopted it. We were assured that the "League" had been "on the rocks," because Monsieur Clemenceau had urged that France could not subscribe to a compact that did not offer her security; whereupon the situation for the "League" was saved by an American diplomat's sending for Monsieur Bourgeois and saying to him "that President Wilson was very near the limit of his patience in the matter," was very much chagrined by the attitude of the French press, which was pleading for the security of France, and would perhaps

drop the whole question of a "League of Nations." It was then put squarely to Monsieur Bourgeois that he would have to decide between this compact and no "League" at all. After consulting Monsieur Clemenceau, Monsieur Bourgeois reported his reluctant acceptance of the proposed covenant rather than permit France to be thus deprived of the good will of America.

It is known that when the President went to Europe the main object of his going was that he might be able to say privately what he did not wish to write or to discuss openly. He had in mind a programme of universal peace which he had gradually thought out in isolation without giving it full publicity, based on the conception of a "League of Nations," a project which has been strongly advocated for some years by the "League to Enforce Peace." Such a "League," as foreshadowed by the President in his public speeches, involved a "general association of nations" that would mutually guarantee the independence and the territorial integrity of all its members; that would secure freedom of navigation upon the seas, alike in peace and war; and that, by the removal of economic barriers, would establish equality of trade conditions for all nations.

At the time this idea of a "League" was conceived, it was intended as a medium for reconciling the differences made prominent in the Great War by securing a compromise peace which might afterward be made the basis of a permanent peace. This was the inner meaning of the "fourteen points." These rubrics were formulated at a time when victory on either side was thought by the President to be still doubtful, and when his original idea of "a peace without victory" may have seemed to him the best method of demonstrating the utter futility of war.

The problem at that time seemed to him to be, to formulate a plan that could be accepted by both sides by promising to secure in the future the most important interests of all the belligerents. The wrong done to France by Prussia in 1871 was to be "righted, in order that peace might once more be made secure in the interest of all." Belgium was to be "evacuated and restored" as a sovereign State, without any stipulation of indemnity. In return, since the new "association" was to be "general," Germany was to have a place in it, and also to enjoy the *status quo* determined by the peace after surrendering the conquered

territories, together with all the advantages which the plan implied. Great Britain was to abandon her naval supremacy under the protection of the "League." Armaments were to be reduced to the lowest point consistent with domestic safety. A free, open-minded, and absolutely impartial judgment of all colonial claims was to be assured, based upon a strict observance of the principle that in determining all such questions of sovereignty the interests of the populations concerned must have equal weight with the claims of the government whose title is to be determined.

Thus, it was imagined, the gates of the temple of Janus would be permanently closed. There would never be any more war, because there would remain no just causes for war. As to the unjust ambitions of nations, these would of course wholly disappear!

As a plan for universal and permanent peace, this is comparable with the great proposal attributed by Sully to Henry IV of France, and should no doubt appeal to the imagination and the sympathies of peaceloving men in a similar manner; but, like that and other great and noble conceptions for world reorganization, its defect was that it did not reckon with the fact that no Great Power was ready to accept it in its entirety except as the result of military defeat.

The truth of this last statement is demonstrated by the events which have followed. When the fourteen rubrics of peace were proposed, in January, 1918, seeing that they embodied a purely mediatory proposal, Germany was ready to accept five of the fourteen points, but these were the five that the Entente Allies were not willing to accept because they implied that Germany was to be treated and trusted as if she were a just and pacific nation. In October, 1918, when the certainty of her defeat dawned upon her, and her allies were failing her, Germany, in the belief that all fourteen were intended in a mediatorial sense, was ready to accept them all "as a basis for discussion." The Entente Allies when invited, not wishing to alienate the President, whose support was necessary in the war, also accepted them with one exception, in the belief that the conditions of the armistice would be sufficiently strong to show that a victory had been won, and on that basis peace was possible with honor.

When the President went to Europe, he hoped to persuade the Entente Allies to accept his entire plan. He intended to convince the British Government that it would be in the interest of Great Britain to accept his idea of the "freedom of the seas" under international control, for if this were not accepted, the United States would in future prepare to hold the supremacy of the seas; and, to impress this point, he directed the Secretary of the Navy to propose immediately an extensive programme of naval construction, and through him exhorted Congress to hasten in passing the necessary legislation, subject to its non-execution if the "League" were formed.

If the British Government had resented this proposal, the consequences to the Entente would have been serious, indeed; but, retorting that, as the two nations were fast and inseparable friends, the building of a greater navy by the United States would afford to Great Britain a new sense of security, the agile-minded Premier convinced the President that British sea-power could not be a menace to neutral nations, since, under the "League," there would be no neutrals in any war in which Great Britain could engage; and the President is reported to have declared that "the joke was on him for not thinking of this," and the "freedom of the seas" is thus settled!

With regard to the "general association" promised in the fourteenth point of the President's peace programme, a similar renunciation has been made, as it was certain from the beginning it would have to be. Nothing could induce France, after what she has endured, to enter any "general association" of which Germany is a member; and of course Russia,—although arrangements were made to negotiate with the Bolsheviki, in spite of Monsieur Clemenceau's declaration that France would never associate with assassins,—could not be included. Germany's recent allies will also, no doubt, if the "League" comes into being, and probably some other Powers, have to sit a long time in the anteroom, even if they are on the waiting list. As a scheme of world organization, therefore, the President's plan is far from being accepted, although so recently as his speech in Manchester on December 30th, he voiced his conception of what the "League" should be in the words: "If the future had nothing for us but a new attempt to keep the world at a right poise by a balance of power, the United States would

take no interest, because she will join no combination of Powers which is not a combination of all of us."

It is precisely such a combination as he here repudiates which the President now insists it is our sacred duty to join, or remain "selfish and provincial." It is Monsieur Clemenceau who has had his way regarding the "balance of power"; for the "League", as the President represents, would be "a scrap of paper" if the power of the United States were not thrown into the scale to render preponderant this combination of four Great Powers and some little ones, which latter will need but not afford protection.

From the moment when the President saw the "joke" regarding British naval supremacy, the British Government became as eager for the "League" as the President had been. In this the Government was joined by the British press and British public opinion, for it was seen that the adherence to such a combination, with the United States as a member, would create a preponderant balance of power.

With an American alliance in which the United States would assume equal responsibility with the European Entente Powers for the peace and control of the rest of Europe, a "League" would undoubtedly be a great security to them all. It would, in effect, place the balance of power entirely in the hands of the "League."

It is not surprising, therefore, that Great Britain, with vast imperial interests in every part of the world exposed to attack, should become an eager advocate of the proposed combination. Retaining her naval supremacy, acquiring no new obligations, and relieved of a share of her responsibility, Great Britain is much interested in bringing the "League" into being. General Smuts, a former Boer officer who had become an ardent imperialist, in order to satisfy the President's desire for a "League" of some kind, had made ready for use in the Peace Conference a detailed plan that would be acceptable to Great Britain. That plan, which contained a provision for the administration of the colonies conquered from Germany, now figures more largely in the proposed "Constitution of a League of Nations" than any other. The idea of administration by "Mandatories" ingeniously extricates those who have taken the German colonies from the dilemma of either stultifying their claims to democracy by annexing them outright or returning them to Germany, by placing them under the ad-

ministration—temporary, no doubt—of other Powers, preferably of the United States, which would thus be drawn into the complications of a joint imperialism in distant parts of the world.

It is quite intelligible that, although it was assumed in Europe that the President speaks with authority for the purpose and policy of the United States, there is in this country no corresponding unanimity regarding the obligations which the United States should undertake to assume in remote and turbulent parts of Europe, Asia, and Africa, or the islands of the Pacific.

In the United States it is clearly perceived that we should be an unequal partner in the combination that is proposed; and the President not only admits this, but urges it as a reason for our accepting new and unpredictable responsibilities.

In stating the case thus candidly, there is no intention to disregard the strong friendship which has developed with Great Britain during the latter years of the war. On the contrary, it is timely to emphasize the wish that this friendship may always continue to be close, loyal, and permanent; but it is the part of wisdom to avoid those complications which, in circumstances that may arise, might tend to alienate two great nations by too close an intimacy in affairs that separately concern them. Great Britain and America have many great interests, as well as many strong bonds of sympathy and understanding, in common. We have among the nations no better friend, unless it is France; for which we have a particular affection of long date and recent demonstration. The British fleet, it is true, annoyed our shipping and embarrassed our trade early in the war, but before the war was ended it became our faithful protector and co-partner. Anywhere in the world, on sea or land, we feel safe where the British flag floats over us, and we should not wish to see it lowered. But before we could agree that we would send our sons and brothers across the seas to fight to keep it wherever it floats outside Great Britain itself,—which to many of us is a mother-land,—we should have to ask ourselves whether we or our fathers would have fought to place it everywhere in the world where the policy of the British Empire has carried it.

Nations and governments, like individuals, from their very nature, must limit their responsibilities. Without this

they weaken and destroy their own capacity for usefulness. It is necessary to be strong before we can help the weak, and we render no real service to those for whom we become entirely responsible. It is for this reason that we ought not as a nation to permit ourselves to be influenced by an appeal to our national pride or the personal sentiments which might properly control us in affairs of a private nature.

The personal experience of the President during his unprecedented ovation in Europe, as the head of a nation that turned the scale in the war, is of a kind that appeals powerfully to the emotional element in his nature. He has led the Entente nations to expect great things of America, and he undoubtedly feels responsible for realizing these expectations. He has held up to enraptured audiences that have thronged to see and hear him the vision of a reconstructed world. Naturally they have had faith in him. They were longing for peace, and he has pictured to them Utopia. He returned to America with a demand for the realization of his promises.

The urgent appeal to the United States to adhere to a "League" without debate, without hesitation, and without regard to any question of national interest or expediency, is the almost necessary psychological consequence of the President's self-imposed activity. The Constitution presented for adoption is not, it is true, the realization of his original purpose; but it is a result of it,—the nearest approach to it that he could achieve. To reject it utterly would be a repudiation of his leadership. The acceptance of it, at least in substance, is necessary to his prestige. It is for this that his "fighting blood" is aroused. It is for this that the President's public and his still more fervid and less parliamentary private denunciations of all critics and opponents, have seemed to him justified. The rôle must be carried to its logical conclusion.

In commending immediate action the President employs none of the arguments which would be expected of a statesman. He has found in Europe, he reports, a general confidence in the disinterestedness of America as a country of great ideals. This is the chief impression of his experience. He said to his Boston audience: "Every interest seeks out first of all, when it reaches Paris, the representatives of the United States. Why? Because—and I think I am stating the most wonderful fact in history—because there is no

nation in Europe that suspects the motives of the United States."

It is frankly admitted that all other nations have "interests," that they are objects of contention among themselves, and that all these nations turn to the United States as a great disinterested benefactor. The United States alone is presumed to have no interests, or to act without regard to them. The President never mentions them. He even scorns a reference to them. His appeal to the country is as emotional as his experience has been. We should, he affirms, act in this great emergency "without regard to the things that may be debated as expedient."

There is grave danger to our national life in resting a decision upon an appeal to the emotions of the people. In the past our statesmen have not hesitated to defend the national interests entrusted to their keeping. These interests are now deliberately excluded from view and sunk in the advocacy of a vague internationalism. This is proposed ostensibly in behalf of "peace", but it will have other consequences. The prospect is confessedly one of interminable suspicion, intervention, and restricted independence. In the end, nations will settle their differences in the manner that seems to them at the time in accordance with their highest interest. Nothing can more effectually breed strife than to mix them up in one another's disputes,—disputes which, if the nations desire mediation, can be more readily composed by a free, strong, united, and independent America, whose word of counsel would be listened to, than by an America bound to the control of a group of Powers, constituting perhaps a third of Europe, in which her voice would be drowned in the general clamor.

We have, of course, a great interest in peace. We have a special and immediate interest in a conclusive and permanent settlement of the actual issues of the war, in which our honor as well as our interests as a nation is bound up. We cannot without disloyalty desert our Allies so long as we have a common enemy, but this does not make it necessary to assume new obligations in other parts of the world. Unless we assume these, the President assures us, America "will have to keep her power for those narrow, selfish, provincial purposes which seem so dear to some minds that have no sweep beyond the nearest horizon."

It is difficult to see the reason for this reproach, and it is

little short of exasperating to those who saw America's duty and urged the performance of it long before the President's vision had swept beyond the nearest horizon, when he was urging neutrality in the midst of international outrage, not only on the part of the Government but in the thoughts as well as the deeds of citizens; when he was still asking what the war was about, and declaring that we had nothing to do with its causes or its results; when he was advising a peace without victory; when he was elected to the Presidency because he had kept us out of war; when he was still regarding strict accountability as implying nothing more than liability to pay a money indemnity for American lives, destroyed ruthlessly in violation of International Law and every instinct of humanity, and yet did not see that preparation for war alone could rescue the nation from contempt. It is, therefore, impossible not to resent the attempt by mere rhetoric and insinuation to silence the free speech of men who are entitled to be heard on international and constitutional questions affecting the destiny of the nation and its unveiled future by a public reference to them as "minds that have no sweep beyond the nearest horizon"; even when this is spoken by the President of the United States.

It is not the path of peace that is being pursued, but a course that is obstructive of peace. The Entente that has saved Europe has been strained by the introduction of new and irrelevant issues, many months have been consumed in deliberations and journeys not related to the ending of the war, and the American people are in danger of being seriously divided over a question that can be rightly settled only on the basis of an existing peace, when they may act with freedom and not under compulsion. If the world is to be made safe for free nations, it will be by an Entente of Free Nations. While that lasts there is hope; but if that ceases to exist, hope will have departed. The moment bonds are felt they will destroy the power that has won the war. By whatever name it is called, there is no third condition between super-government and the independence of free peoples. Discussion over speculations about such a possibility are but a waste of time; for the free nations do not desire a super-government. There remains, therefore, no possibility but an Entente of Free Nations, however it may be named, and our one solicitude should be that it be not destroyed.

To the word "League" there is in itself no objection, except to the bondage which the word implies. For the improvement and enforcement of International Law, for the pacific settlement of disputes, for aid to free nations exposed to danger, for the suppression of Bolshevism, and for international bodies to deal with these subjects, there is great need. But these ends cannot be accomplished by mere paper machinery, which presents only a new cause of disagreement—a new occasion for difference of opinion and of strife. If the ideals of civilization are not safe in the hands of the free nations, acting freely, they will remain in danger. What happens in the future will depend upon what the free nations will to do; and the essential element in their unity, their security, and their effective cooperation is precisely their freedom.

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